

Joseph M. DeThomas (December 2001 - July 2004)



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Joseph M. DeThomas took the oath of office as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Estonia on November 9, 2001, and he presented his credentials to the President of the Republic of Estonia Arnold Rüütel on December 11 of that year. He concluded this tour as Ambassador on July 7, 2004.

During his tenure, a number of important new developments occurred in U.S.-Estonian relations, capped by Estonia's invitation to NATO. Ambassador DeThomas was given the Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana, 1st Class, by President Arnold Rüütel, as well as the Service Medallion of the Estonian Defense Forces by Vice Admiral Tarmo Kõuts. He traveled extensively during his time in Estonia, visiting all fifteen Estonian counties within a year of his arrival.

Ambassador DeThomas worked on European and global security issues for much of his diplomatic career, which began in 1977. Prior to becoming U.S. Ambassador to Estonia, he served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Nonproliferation. Earlier, he has served as Director of the Office of European Union and Regional Affairs and as an Office Director in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. He also held a number of posts abroad, including Deputy Chief of Mission in Vienna and Addis Ababa.

He is the holder of several Department of State Superior Honor Awards, and a Meritorious Honor Award for earthquake rescue work in Mexico. His Embassy in Ethiopia was given a group superior honor award for its role in rescuing 28,000 Ethiopian Jews during the Ethiopian civil war. His unit in Tehran was also awarded a group citation for valor.

Ambassador DeThomas earned both Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Pennsylvania State University, as well as a Master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University. He is a distinguished graduate of the National War College. He was born in Easton, Pennsylvania. His

languages include German, Spanish, Farsi, and some Estonian. He is married to Leslie K. Davidson and is the father of two children.